



***Law Offices of the Los Angeles County
Alternate Public Defender***

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June 4, 2003

Honorable Yvonne Braithwaite Burke
Chair, Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
866 Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Expansion of the Alternate Public Defender (APD)

Dear Supervisor Burke,

On April 29, 2003, the Board of Supervisors approved the Chief Administrative Officer's Proposed Budget which includes the APD's expansion to Alhambra, Citrus, Downey, Pomona and Southeast Courts. I am writing to address expansion concerns that were expressed by Presiding Judge Robert Dukes in a letter to the Board of Supervisors dated May 27, 2003.

The Court describes the APD's proposal as "seriously flawed" and expresses concern that only seven attorneys will be available to staff expansion courthouses. The Court is incorrect. Had the Court allowed the APD to attend a joint meeting between the Chief Administrative Office and expansion site judges on May 22, 2003, the Court's concerns would have been addressed at that time. Notwithstanding this, the APD has agreed to conduct separate meetings at each expansion courthouse to discuss APD staffing with judges designated by the Court. The APD has never underestimated staffing and Judge Dukes has never reported staffing problems or adverse impact upon programs in any court that we currently service.

As I explained to your Justice Deputies at a publically noticed meeting on April 16, 2003, expansion to these remaining courthouses can be achieved with minimum funding due to significant efficiencies that will be generated for the department through these expansions in particular, and through the economies of scale in general. The APD's growth over the years has increased our ability to absorb workload and spread costs. Our larger size of over 230 outstanding and dedicated county employees provides flexibility to transfer staff between courts and meet individual courthouse needs when they arise. You have my personal assurance that expansion courthouses will be sufficiently staffed, smoothly implemented, and efficiently operated. To that end, we have already begun processes to ensure a successful transition of services effective August 1, 2003.

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As you know, the APD has successfully expanded to every other courthouse in the County saving millions of dollars every year. We have never underestimated staffing. We fill only positions needed and return unspent money to the general fund. We have established a reputation for excellence: quality service to courts and quality representation of clients.

On behalf of the entire department, thank you for your continued support and confidence in our ability to provide the highest quality of indigent defense representation at the lowest possible cost for the County. I look forward to working with the Court to implement successful operations at every expansion courthouse. If you have any questions, or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Most Sincerely,

JANICE Y. FUKAI
Alternate Public Defender

cc: Hon. Gloria Molina, Supervisor/First District
Hon. Zev Yaroslavsky, Supervisor/Third District
Hon. Don Knabe, Supervisor/Fourth District
Hon. Michael D. Antonovich, Supervisor/Fifth District
David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
Robert A Dukes, Presiding Judge
Hon. William A. MacLaughlin, Asst. Presiding Judge
All Supervising Judges
All Alternate Public Defender Staff
Los Angeles County Bar Association, ICDA Panel Director